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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 05, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of "Israeli big ground offensive" dominated front pages on Monday. All newspapers highlighted reports on a "suicide attack" in NWFP's southern district of Dera Ismail Khan that killed 10 people, including four policemen. Foreign Minister Qureshi's statement rejecting "India's demand to handover terror suspects linked to the strikes," as "there was no extradition treaty between the two countries" received prominence in all major dailies. The English daily, "Dawn," Washington report stated that "India wants Washington to persuade Islamabad to handover Mumbai terror suspects." Several major newspapers reported "Boucher due today (Monday) with heavy agenda," in regards to the Assistant Secretary of State's visit and that Vice President-elect "Joseph Biden to visit Pakistan this week to defuse tension."

All major Urdu language newspapers ran editorials pertaining to the ongoing "Israeli military aggression" against Palestinians in Gaza Strip. The center-right nationalist daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt," commented that the "Israeli attack on Gaza is a slap on the faces of peace loving states and nations and rich Arab states that are instrumental in the implementation of the international U.S. agenda." The Liberal Urdu daily, "Express," noted that "there is no chance of Israel's condemnation from the UN platform because the U.S. supports Israel, and Britain cannot afford to annoy the U.S." The pro-Taliban Jihadi daily, "Islam," observed that "in the present state of affairs, liberal and moderate Muslims have also become ready to lay their lives for this cause." However, Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer," wrote: "There was urgent need on the part of the OIC to have come out with a concrete action plan to make Israel stop its aggression but unfortunately it has resorted to rhetoric alone." End Summary.

News Stories

"Israeli Tanks And Artillery Battle Hamas Fighters; Invading Troops Surround Gaza's Main City In Big Ground Offensive" "Dawn" (01/05)

"Tens of thousands of Israeli troops backed by tanks and artillery battled Hamas fighters in Gaza fields and roads on Sunday as the Palestinian death toll from the Israeli military aggression passed 1500. Israeli forces surrounded the enclave's main city and families fled other battlefield towns in packed trucks and cars to escape the biggest Israeli military aggression since its 2006 war in Lebanon. More than 45 Palestinians were killed by tank shells or missiles fired from warplanes since the ground offensive was launched on Saturday night, Gaza medics said."

"U.S. Heads Off UNSC Move On Gaza Ceasefire" "The News" (01/05)

"The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has failed to agree on a statement calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip after the United States argued a return to the situation that existed

before Israel's ground invasion was unacceptable."

"Suicide Bomber Traps, Kills 10 In Dera Ismail Khan" "The News" (01/05)

"Ten persons, including four policemen, were killed and 27 others injured in two bomb blasts near the Polytechnic College in Dera Ismail Khan on Sunday. Eyewitnesses said soon after the blast, police personnel and people rushed to the spot. As a large number of policemen and people gathered at the site, a 16-year-old suicide bomber forced his entry into the crowd and blew himself up."

"2 Injured In Bannu Suicide Blast" "Daily Times" (01/05)

"A suicide bomber was killed while two people received injuries near a check-post in Officers' Colony in Bannu on Sunday. The suicide bomber blew himself up in an attempt to target a check-post but could not succeed as the bomb went off before he could reach his target."

"Taliban Behead 5 Security Men In Tit-For-Tat Response" "The Statesman" (01/05)

"Five bodies of security personnel were found hanging from electricity poles at Green Chowk and Sohrab Chowk in Mingora city with a note 'those who kill Taliban would face the similar fate,'. Local Taliban claimed responsibility."

"Taliban Consolidating Grip On Quetta: Sanaullah Baloch" "Daily Times" (01/05)

"Balochistan National Party (BNP) Information Secretary and former senator Sanaullah Baloch has disclosed that the supporters of Taliban have captured land worth Rs 2 billion in the eastern and western parts of Quetta with the covert support of the 'establishment' in order to undermine the Baloch nationalist movement and promote Talibanization in Balochistan."

"Arms Seized On Sixth Day Of Khyber Operation" "Daily Times" (01/05)

"A military operation in Jamrud tehsil of Khyber Agency continued for the sixth consecutive day as security forces raided a Taliban hideout and seized arms and vehicles."

"Taliban Rule The Roost In Swat Through FM Radio" "The News" (01/05)

"Most people in Swat are becoming regular listeners of the FM radio channel run by the Maulana Fazlullah-led Swati Taliban as they want to know about new threats or decrees issued by the militants.... The FM radio is obviously illegal but it continues to operate every night. Sometimes, the authorities try to block its broadcasts but the radio is back on air after a while. Maulana Fazlullah's deputy Maulana Shah Dauran attributes this to Allah's help for Taliban and tells his listeners that their FM radio broadcasts cannot be blocked as alternate arrangements were in place to continue broadcasting."

"No Let-Up In Swat Violence As 5 More Killed" "The News" (01/05)

"Five more persons, including two security forces personnel, were killed in separate incidents of violence in the volatile Swat Valley on Sunday."

"TTP Sets Up Courts, Complaint Centers In Upper Orakzai Agency" "The News" (01/05)

"The Orakzai chapter of the proscribed Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has established Shariah courts and complaint centers in most parts of the agency, directing people to resolve their disputes in accordance with the Islamic laws. Sources told 'The News' that the local TTP established two complaint centers and Shariah courts in Kundi Sheikhan and Ghaljo on Sunday."

"Taliban Ban Co-Education In Tribal Areas" "The Nation" (01/05)

"After banning girls education in Swat, Taliban on Sunday imposed restrictions on co-education in tribal areas bordering Afghanistan."

Pamphlets attributed to the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were distributed in the tribal areas, asking school owners and teachers to close down all institutes offering co-education even at the pre-school level."

"BISP To Be Launched For FATA Women" "Dawn" (01/05)

"The government has decided to take the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) to people in tribal areas, despite reported threats from the local Taliban that women receiving monetary help would be killed, BISP's Chairperson Farzana Raja told 'Dawn' on Sunday."

"Pakistan Rejects Manmohan's Demand Over Mumbai Suspects" "The Nation" (01/05)

"On the eve of a top U.S. diplomat's visit Pakistan to push Islamabad to act against the Mumbai attack perpetrators, Pakistan on Sunday rejected India's demand to hand over terror suspects linked to the strikes, insisting that there was no extradition treaty between the two countries. There can be no comparison between Pakistan's extradition of terror suspects to the U.S. and India's demand for the handing over of persons linked to the Mumbai attacks, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi told a news conference in Multan.... Qureshi said the tensions sparked by the Mumbai attack had been defused due to the intervention of 'friends and important nations in the region and beyond.'"

"India Seeks U.S. Support For Extradition Demand" "Dawn" (01/05)

"The United States is once again being pushed into playing a major role in an India-Pakistan dispute - this time by New Delhi which wants Washington to persuade Islamabad to hand over Mumbai terror suspects. India is sending a special emissary - Home Minister P. Chidambaram - to Washington this week as part of a global diplomatic offensive aimed at isolating Pakistan. Washington is also sending its points-man for South Asia, Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher, to the region for defusing tensions between the two nuclear neighbors."

"India To Give U.S. Mumbai Attacks 'Evidence'" "Business Recorder" (01/05)

"The sophistication of the Mumbai attack points to the involvement of 'state actors' in Pakistan, India's Home Minister said on Sunday, ahead of a visit to the United States with a dossier of evidence, Chidambaram told NDTV news channel."

"Boucher Due Today With Heavy Agenda" "The Nation," "The Post," "Pakistan Observer," "Business Recorder," "The Frontier Post" (01/05)

"U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher will arrive in Islamabad today (Monday) and hold talks with Pakistani leadership on Indo-Pak tension, terrorism and other issues of mutual interests."

"Joe Biden To Visit Pakistan To Defuse Tension" "Daily Times" (01/05)

"United States vice-president-elect Joseph Biden will arrive in Pakistan on a two-day visit this week to defuse the tension between Pakistan and India after the Mumbai terror attacks, a private TV channel reported on Sunday. The channel quoted diplomatic sources as saying that a high-level congressional delegation would also accompany Biden. The delegation would meet President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani to discuss the war on terror in Pakistan, Pak-India relations and a \$15 billion aid package for Islamabad. The sources said the U.S. delegation is likely to arrive in Pakistan on January 9."

"Secret Deal Between India And U.S. Revealed" "Ummat" (01/05)

"Indian newspaper Times of India has revealed the Manmohan administration has made a secret deal with the U.S. on earlier this month under which U.S. would provide latest equipment to Indian Navy worth \$2.10 billion. Under the agreement, India would have right to acquire more fighter jets from the U.S."

"Israel's Latest Ground Assault; War Against The Arab And Muslim World," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (01/05)

"The Israeli attack on Gaza is a slap on the faces of peace loving states and nations and rich Arab states that are instrumental in the implementation of the international U.S. agenda.... It is not only Israel that has the right to defend as Palestinians do have the same right. The Israeli declaration of war is not just against Hamas or Palestinians; it is against Arabs and Muslims."

"Israeli Ground Assault In Gaza: Moment Of Concern For The Muslim World," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (06/24)

"Rulers of Muslim countries must ask themselves: how long will they think mere lip-service [to the Palestinian cause] is enough.... There is no chance of Israel's condemnation from the UN platform because the U.S. supports Israel and Britain cannot afford to annoy the U.S. Palestinians need to be prepared for a long struggle again and they must remember that, as always, they will be alone in their struggle."

"Zionist Invasion At Gaza And Cowardice Of Muslim Rulers," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/05)

"On the one hand, common Muslims are holding protest demonstrations across the world, and on the other hand, Muslim rulers are not ready to move against Israel. The big powers and the Muslim governments have left with Muslim youth with no option except the 'do or die' choice. In the present state of affairs, liberal and moderate Muslims have also become ready to lay their lives for this cause. The international community must understand that there is always a limit of injustice, violence and discrimination. Are the big powers waiting for another 9/11 incident?"

"OIC Should Convene UN Meeting On Gaza," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/05)

"What is more alarming is that Israel is indulging in extremely intolerable action of destruction of mosques. This belies claims of the Jewish State that only Hamas strongholds are the targets. In this backdrop, there was urgent need on the part of the OIC to have come out with a concrete action plan to make Israel stop its aggression but unfortunately it has resorted to rhetoric alone.... Apart from building up diplomatic pressure individually, the OIC states should have demanded immediate convening of the UN session to discuss Israeli aggression against Palestinians."

"Palestinian Massacre In Gaza And American Strategy," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (01/05)

"The conditions faced by hapless Gaza residents could be faced by other Muslim societies. In order to create a safeguard against hostile U.S. designs the Muslim societies should promote democratic, political system and make the people real power in these societies. The Muslim societies should also make it clear to the world that no Muslim country would be left alone by the Muslim community in time of need."

"Israeli Aggression: A Cause Of Concern For The International Community," an editorial in Lahore-based Urdu daily "Waqt" (Cir.10,000) (01/05)

"Are the Muslim states so helpless that they cannot prevent Israel from this aggression or put pressure on the U.S. to stop its illogical support of Israel and adopt fairness? The world, especially the U.S., western countries and Muslim states need to understand that peace is not possible through use of force."

"Israeli Aggression - Silence Of International Community And Aloofness Of Muslim States," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (01/05)

"It is highly unfortunate that Israel with the connivance of the U.S. had sent the popularly elected Hamas administration away to home, and now it is killing the innocent Palestinians in the garb of taking action against Hamas. Now the Muslim countries must not expect that the UN or the western countries will provide justice to Muslim, particularly Palestinians any longer. All Muslim countries must not look at the west, rather they should convene an urgent meeting of the OIC to save the lives of besieged innocent Muslims in Gaza Strip."

"When Will Muslim Countries Wake Up?," editorial in the Karachi-based center-right sensationalist Urdu daily "Ummat" (cir. 33,000) (01/05)

"As expected, international community in general and Muslim countries in particular remained indifferent to the killings of Palestinians. The American President-elect Obama too remained silent over Israeli aggression. And among 57 Muslim states, not a single state dared to ask President Bush that why the innocent civilians are being deprived of medicine and food? One hopes that a day will come when the awakened Muslim masses would succeed in waking up their rulers to save humanity from U.S. and Israel's state terrorism."

"Matters Of Appearance," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/05)

"The incident in which nine Muslims were removed from a flight at Washington airport, while on their way to a spiritual meeting, belies the deep prejudice based on religion that still persists in most western countries.... It is obviously an unacceptable one. The discrimination against Muslims depicts racism in its worst form.

In the U.S. it sometimes parallels the attitude black people faced through past decades, with Muslims today presumed guilty unless they can prove their innocence. This attitude must be changed. A more conscious effort to do so must be made. Otherwise the hatred and suspicion it breeds will, in time, destroy us all."

"World Is Silent On Indian Terrorism," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (01/05)

"There are over a dozen separatist militant movements in India actively involved in massive violent activities. Though it is India's internal problem and no country has right to interfere but Pakistan who cannot remain aloof to Indian atrocities in Kashmir because it is a disputed area and Pakistani Muslims have deep sympathies with Indian Muslims. It is surprising that the international community is silent on sufferings of Muslims in India."

"The War Drama," an op-ed by Khurshid Akhtar Khan in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/05)

"It is time to review our long association with the Americans that has not blossomed into mutual respect on either side and now, the entry of the Indians in the triangle has tilted the balance of alliance heavily in favor of the Indians. A majority of our public is hostile to the American policies and resent their domination of our internal affairs. It has been proved time and again that the American cooperation with us is on need basis to capitalize on our logistic and nuisance value in their pursuit of world domination that ceases with fulfillment of their objectives."

"Kayani's Call," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (01/05)

"It cannot be gainsaid that the drone attacks notably add to the anger among the local people but also undermine efforts to seek broader support of the tribal people against terrorists.... There seems no change in the U.S. policy of drone attacks inside Pakistan; with the result it has fanned anti-Americanism feelings in the region. It is time the government told the U.S. in clear terms that since the continuing drone attacks are not helping but hindering the fight against terror. If the U.S. does not immediately revise its

policy of violating our sovereignty, success in the war against terrorism will remain an elusive dream."

"Please See To It That Army Is Not Exhausted," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/05)

"The on-going war on terror has assumed new but dangerous dimensions but there appears to be no change in the policy of the Government. The situation has serious implications for the future of the country and therefore, there is dire need to carry out reassessment of the entire policy.... We would urge the authorities concerned to initiate dialogue and halt the operation to give respite to the troops as well as inhabitants of the area who are braving harsh weather as well as fighting."

"Time For Internal Reform," an op-ed by Ahmed Quraishi in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/05)

"The U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and its larger plans for the region do not bode well for Pakistan. Faced by a divided NATO and rising Russia and China, Washington needs Indian military help if it wants to keep Afghanistan under occupation. If India is to be brought into Afghanistan, a weaker and localized Pakistan better suits U.S. interests. Denuclearizing Pakistan and ending its alliance with China are also not possible without weakening the Pakistani military."

Patterson